

Message Text

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PAGE 01 JERUSA 01293 051620Z
ACTION SS-25

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FM AMCONSUL JERUSALEM
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 897
INFO AMEMBASSY
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY PARIS IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV IMMEDIATE
USMISSION USUN NEW HORK IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T JERUSALEM 1293

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PORG, MARR, MOPS, UNSC, PLO, IS, LE, FR
SUBJ: TEXT OF ERSKINE MESSAGE ON UNIFIL NEEDS IN TYRE AREA

REF: JERUSALEM 1285

1. UN SOURCE HAS GIVEN US COPY OF ERSKINE'S MAY 4 MESSAGE TO UNNY
(NOTED
REFTEL) WHICH (1) ASKS FOR PERMISSION TO PUL OUT OF TYRE: (2)
EXPLAINS PLAN TO DEPLOY FRENCH AND SENEGALESE UNITS ON HIGH
GROUND AROUND TYRE SALIENT, AND (3) ASKS FOR MORE HEAVY EQUIP-
MENT. TEXT FOLLOWS:

2. BEGIN TEXT: "UPON MY ARRIVAL, A CRITICAL EVALUATION OF
2 MAY SERIOUS EVENTS IN TYRE AREA WAS MADE WITH MY STAFF AND
THE FOLLOWING CONCLUSIONS HAVE BEEN DRAWN.

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2. "SOME MILITARY REORGANIZATION OF UNIFIL FORCES IS MANDATORY.
THE CURRENT TACTICAL DEPLOYMENT OF FORCES IN AND AROUND
TYRE POCKET AND RECENT ACTIONS BY ARMED ELEMENTS HAVE
RESULTED IN SOME OF THOSE ELEMENTS ENTERING AREAS VACATED
BY IDF. GROUPS OF ARMED ELEMENTS OF SIZES
UP TO FIFTY HAVE INFILTRATED INTO THE AREA BEGINNING

ON NIGHT OF 30 APRIL IN ADDITION TO NUMEROUS SMALL GROUPS OF ARMED PERSONNEL WHO HAVE ALSO INFILTRATED INTO AREA. ALTHOUGH SOME GROUPS OF 15 OF 20 ARMED PERSONNEL HAVE BEEN SUCCESSFULLY REMOVED FROM THE AREA, UNKNOWN NUMBERS OF UNARMED INDIVIDUALS HAVE RETURNED AS REFUGEES OR DISPLACED PERSONS AND HAVE TAKEN PREVIOUSLY HIDDEN WEAPONS AND AMMUNITION CACHES. IT IS ANTICIPATED THAT THESE FORCES WILL NOT PEACEFULLY WITHDRAW WHEN CONFRONTED BY UN PERSONNEL.

3. THE EXPLOSIVE SITUATION IN TYRE WHICH OCCURRED ON 2. MAY AND STILL CONTINUES, HAS PROVEN THAT FRENCH FORCES IN THE CITY AND IN SMALL OUTPOSTS ARE VULNERABLE AND ALMOST IMPOSSIBLE TO REINFORCE WITHOUT SERIOUS CASUALTIES AND ARE VIRTUALLY BEING HELD HOSTAGE IN THEIR OWN AREA OF OPERATIONS. IT RE-EMPHASIZES THE FACT THAT THE ROUTES OF COMMUNICATIONS CAN BE MILITARILY CUT AT ANY TIME. THE DENSE ORCHARDS IN VICINITY OF MANY OF THE CHECKPOINTS PRECLUDE GOOD OBSERVATION. THESE CHECKPOINTS WERE SELECTED AS THE BEST POSITIONS AVAILABLE AT THE TIME AS THE IDF HAD SEIZED ALL THE BEST DEFENSIVE AREAS AND THESE CHECKPOINTS WERE THE ONLY AREAS THAT WE COULD INTERPOSE UN PRESENCE BETWEEN THE PLO AND IDF POSITIONS. SINCE IDF WITHDRAWAL ON 30 APRIL, UNIFIL HAS OCCUPIED THOSE EVACUATED POSITIONS WITH SENEGALESE FORCES. FRENCH AND SENEGALESE BATTALIONS HAVE BEEN UNABLE
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TO PREVENT ALL INFILTRATION OUT OF TYRE POCKET GIVEN THE CONSTANT EFFORTS AND STATED INTENTIONS BY ARMED ELEMENTS TO INFILTRATE INTO UNIFIL AREA. BASED ON THIS SITUATION, AND THE FACT THAT THE FRENCH ARE OPERATING FROM WITHIN A PLO DOMINATED AREA, AND IN ORDER TO MINIMIZE FURTHER ANTICIPATED CLASHES AND CASUALTIES, WE HAVE RE-EVALUATED OUR CURRENT DEPLOYMENT AND PROPOSE TO REORGANIZE.

1. "OUR PLAN IS TO DIVIDE THE TYRE POCKET INTO TWO SECTORS TO BE OCCUPIED BY THE FRENCH IN THE SOUTH AND THE SENEGALESE IN THE NORTH. THESE TWO BATTALIONS WILL BE DEPLOYED IN STRENGTH AND IN DEPTH IN THOSE HIGH-GROUND POSITIONS WHICH THE IDF PREVIOUSLY OCCUPIED AND WHICH ARE TACTICALLY SUPERIOR TO THE PRESENT FRENCH DEPLOYMENT IN THE ORANGE GROVE AREA. CONSEQUENTLY, THE FRENCH BATTALION COMMAND POST WILL BE RELOCATED OUT OF THE TYRE BARRACKS AND INTO A NEW LOCATION EAST OF TYRE (PROBABLY IN QANA). WITH RESULTING SHIFT AND STRENGTHENING OF THE SENEGALES BATTALION. WE ARE AWARE THAT AFTER THIS REORGANIZATION UNIFIL MAY BE DENIED FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT BY HOSTILE ELEMENTS ON THE COASTAL ROAD BUT THIS

FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT IS ALREADY QUESTIONABLE. ADEQUATE LINES OF COMMUNICATION OTHER THAN THE COASTAL ROAD TO SUPPORT UNIFIL ARE AVAILABLE (THROUGH BAKAA VALLEY AND ROAD NETWORK ACROSS AKIYA BRIDGE AND SELECTED ENTRIES FROM ISRAEL) BUT COULD BE CUT OFF AT ANY TIME. MILITARY CONSIDERATIONS STATED ABOVE FAR OUTWEIGH THE POLITICAL CONSIDERATIONS SINCE THIS REORGANIZATION WILL MINIMIZE CLASHES AND CASUALTIES AND WILL IMPROVE THE CONTROL OF INFILTRATION BY UNIFIL. THE REORGANIZATION WILL ALLOW OPTIMUM EFFECTIVENESS IN THE ACCOMPLISHMENT OF UNIFIL OBJECTIVES WITH THE MEANS AVAILABLE AT THIS TIME TO THE FORCE. WE MUST BEAR IN MIND THAT, WHEN THE 6,000 MEM UNIFIL FORCE IS FULLY EQUIPPED AND DEPLOYED, WE SHALL REASSESS THE SITUATION

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IN THE AREA OF OPERATIONS, POSSIBLY TO INCLUDE TYRE, AND MAY DETERMINE THAT FURTHER REDEPLOYMENTS ARE APPROPRIATE.

5. "WE ALSO FIRMLY BELIEVE THAT UNIFIL MUST HAVE AT LEAST EQUAL OR BETTER WEAPONS/EQUIPMENT THAN THOSE OF THE ARMED ELEMENT IN THE AREA. IN THE FUTURE, WHEN THOSE ARMED ELEMENTS WHICH HAVE ALREADY INFILTRATED THE AREA OF OPERATIONS HAVE BECOME ORGANIZED AND EVENTUALLY ARE CONFRONTED OR INITIATE HOSTILE ACTIVITIES OF THEIR OWN UNIFIL MUST HAVE THE NECESSARY MANDATE, FIRE POWER AND PROTECTION TO REDUCE OR ELIMINATE THE THREAT BY FORCE. THE PLANNED REDEPLOYMENT WILL NOT PREVENT ALL THE INFILTRATION OR FILL THE VOID IN THE POPULATED AREAS IN THE CENTRAL AREA WITHOUT ADDITIONAL FORCES TRAINED AND PROPERLY EQUIPPED TO ENGAGE IN THIS TYPE OF ACTION. IN THIS REGARD, WE STRONGLY REITERATE THE NEED FOR INCOMING CONTINGENTS TO BE EQUIPPED WITH APCs AND ARMoured VEHICLES WHICH WILL PROVIDE BOTH FIRE POWER PROTECTION AND MOBILITY.

6. "WE WOULD APPRECIATE YOUR VIEW ON EVACUATION OF TYRE BARRACKS." END TEXT.

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